

logers offered plen-
e, but no proposals.
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ls escorted a dozen
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pment guidelines
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ian started getting
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l planned on writ-
ning the hospital
ces. On Oct. 13,
a letter to Cook
it John Stroger.
st month I have
wrote. "On both
at the [request for
prepared and it
On Page 8

J with a heavy wooden door, a pair of sunny
windows, the curious air of a Victorian liv-
ing room, and thousands upon thousands of
books. Books stacked to the ceiling in cabinets
SOUTH LOOP with glass doors, books laid out
in museum cases and on hard-
wood tables, books shelved head high along the
walls, in the office, in a fluorescent-lit stock

door 10 or 12 hours later to summon him home in
the dark to supper and bed.

"I got the greatest job in the world," I e
said. "What job could be greater than this."
Since July, LaPine has been running Printers
and Rare Books at 715 S. Dearborn,
newspapers
Algren's The

scrawlings of Aldous Huxley, Ralph Ellison,
Edith Wharton, Thomas Thackeray, William
Faulkner, Carl Sandburg, Winston Churchill,
Ernest Hemingway.

"I mean, where else can you go and there's a
signature of Edith Wharton's on the wall?"
LaPine said. "And here's the actual note
See BOOKS on Page 10

Chicago Journal Vol #4 No. 2
Thursday, October 30, 2003

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Early plan completed for DuSable Park

By LYDIALYLE GIBSON

Staff Writer

In the beginning, DuSable Park was-
n't a park at all—not even in name. It
was a dumping ground for Streeter-
ville's deep-dug foundations, a nub
of a lakefront peninsula where dirt piled
up and weeds grew on top. Later it was
mulled as a high-rise site, and later still
as a parking lot. For
SOUTH LOOP six or seven decades—
even after DuSable Park was dedicated
by Harold Washington in 1987—radioac-

*Design offers public art, historical perspective,
a habitat crawling with creatures—but no boathouse*

tive thorium lay undetected in the
ground there, the residue of an incan-
descent lamp factory gone since the
1930s. The pollution was only discovered
in late 2000.

Mostly, though, DuSable Park has
been a ragged and lonely wilderness at

the mouth of the Chicago River just
south of Navy Pier. But that's about to
change.

For nigh three years now, plans have
been underway to transform DuSable
Park from a nominal greenspace to a
real one. The park was scrubbed of tho-

rium. Art Institute officials put \$100,000
toward a monumental statue for its cen-
terpiece. Than last month some dozen
skull sessions with a recently convened
steering committee yielded a concrete
step in that direction: a design for the
park-to-be. While it's not final—the pub-
lic still needs to sign off on the draw-
ings, as do Park District higher-ups—the
design outlines a \$5 million-plus project
that fuses open space and public art with
the earliest stirrings of Chicago history.
It does not, however, make room for a
See DUSABLE on Page 7

ening flowers nto dollars

lents' hard work on Skinner Park soil,
s to find funds for larger improvements

PUTRE

The catch is that residents are sup-
posed to raise most of the cash, footing
two-thirds of the bill for the garden and
half for the DFA. So far, that's been an
uphill battle.

"In today's economic climate, every-
body has to really look at what is realis-
tic," said May Toy, president of the

IN THE JOURNAL

The rigors of poetry

*Writer Mary Kinzie
brings her verse,
self-discipline
to the Art Institute*

3

A not-so-simple plan

*Architecture critic
none too thrilled
about either design
for State and Congress*

4

Well-dressed skeletons in Prairie Ave. closets

*Victorian palaces have a history of hauntings—and
a curse that even the wrecking ball couldn't demolish*

By LAURA PUTRE
Editor

Not all of the old mansions in the
Prairie Avenue Historic District
have resident ghosts, but since
they date from the Victorian era,
they do carry a built-in creepy quotient

also had its share of rich eccentrics who
met violent deaths. Marshall Field Jr.,
resident of 1919 S. Prairie, died from a
gunshot wound that some say was self-
inflicted and others say was the handi-
work of a showgirl at the Everly Club.
And Max Rothchild, a wealthy entrepre-
neur who lived with his family at 2112 S.

TI
1/3/03

DUSABLE

Continued from page 1

boathouse, as some rowers and kayakers had hoped.

"We're still tweaking," said Rosalind Hecim, a staff assistant for 42nd Ward Alderman Burton Natarus. "There are still minor adjustments. ... The alderman's main objective is to get the park built."

According to the plan, hemmed by an elliptical walking path, DuSable Park would be divided between a manicured lawn and rough vegetation. Two diagonal entrances from under Lake Shore Drive would lead to a pair of plazas at the park's northwest and southwest corners, from which the three-acre site would slope down toward the lake. Across the southeast corner of the greenspace, Park District officials would lay down a short boardwalk where visitors could stand just a foot or so from the water's swampy edge. In fact, according to Park District Project Manager Dan Purciarello, the boardwalk would likely be underwater now and then, owing to Lake Michigan's ebb and flow.

"I'm really excited about that," Purciarello said. "It allows all kinds of aquatic, emergent, and highland plants."

Park District officials are also pondering the possibility of a dock at DuSable Park, where boaters may tie up temporarily, but not launch their vessels.

Meanwhile, rising to a summit, a large sculpture of Chicago's unsung father and DuSable Park's namesake—a black farmer, fur trapper, and settler named Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable—will occupy the plaza at the northwest corner. Carved



Chicago Journal file photo

Last year, environmental officials scooped the pollution out of DuSable Park. This year, Park District officials are planning the greenspace's design.

as an American hero, who came to this land with the purpose of building a city here. It is a great American story. The history, we think, should be clearly, *clearly* included. You see a statue and you can still be in doubt about what it depicts, but words leave no doubt. They say, 'It started like that.'"

Rashid would like to see DuSable Park's engraved narrations and interpretive panels become just one part of a whole "du Sable memorial trail" stretching from the site of the settler's Mag Mile cabin to DuSable Harbor.

merged boardwalk is just the kind of thing Jones is after. In fact, the steering committee's plan calls for the lake wall around DuSable Park to change heights throughout. Recreationalists standing at its northwestern corner will be much farther from the water than those standing along the park edge farther east into Lake Michigan.

Jones said he's also looking forward to seeing DuSable Park sown with some of the same plants du Sable himself might have seen along the city's shoreline—cottonwoods, bur oaks.

people are moving in. DuSable Park is the last piece of that puzzle."

For the most part, Purciarello managed to accommodate the steering committee's divergent interests in the site's artistic potential, its history, its flora and fauna, its recreational possibilities. (Purciarello said he sees DuSable Park as a likely spot for concerts, festivals, parties, school trips.) But Purciarello did not manage to find space for the public boathouse that members of the Chicago River Rowing and Paddling Center had hoped to root there. Led by organizer

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CHICAGO JOURNAL

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du Sable will occupy the plaza at the northwest corner. Carved out by sculptor Martin Puryear, the statue will be part of an entire display offering historical information about the city and its founder, who built the city's first homestead on the north bank of the Chicago River at Michigan Avenue.

For many on the steering committee, DuSable Park's tribute to its namesake was paramount. Over the years, promoting du Sable's overlooked legacy has become a kind of calling. Haroon Rashid, founder and president of Friends of DuSable, is one of those who answered. Since 1999, his group has organized lecture series on du Sable at the Chicago Historical Society, innumerable symposiums, and essay programs to teach third-graders across the city about du Sable. Rashid said he's even hoping to get March 4, the city's birthday, declared DuSable Day.

"I don't look at du Sable as being an African-American hero," Rashid said. "I look at him

setter's mag mine cabin to DuSable Harbor.

"The park, the harbor, the monument—it's all part of the legacy of du Sable," Rashid said. "We're just happy there will be a park in the area where this man lived that has his name on it, a place where people can come and reflect. But the park is just one part of it."

Steering committee member David Jones, meanwhile, found himself scrutinizing DuSable Park's more elemental aspects. A design consultant to the Friends of the Chicago River, Jones wanted to make sure the lake edge was soft, that its rocky corners and grassy slopes would offer refuge to snails, fish, mayflies, Eastern soft-shell spiny turtles, great blue herons.

"We're talking about the whole food chain," Jones said. "Friends of the Chicago River has been interested in habitat, places for creatures to find food, raise their young, hide from predators, that sort of thing."

Purciarello's sometime-sub-

have seen along the city's shoreline: cottonwoods, bur oaks, liz... tail, arrowhead, red osier dogwoods, bull rushes cattails, prairie grasses.

According to Purciarello, the very design of the park—not just its plants—recalls the city's founding. A rugged, weedy lake edge will march landward where a wide swath of mowed, manicured grass will emerge from a bosky canopy of trees and wild-growing underbrush. DuSable Park's main entrance will face southeast, toward the confluence of the lake and the river.

"This design integrates a lot into a small space, but it does it very elegantly," said Bob O'Neill, president of the Grant Park Advisory Council and another member of the steering committee. "It takes a derelict, vacant, radioactive piece of property in a very important area and turns it into a destination. Historically, that whole area used to be an industrial waste dump. It's taken a long time, but it's finally gotten greened up and developed and

Planning Center had hoped to root there. Led by organizer Susan Urbas, the group... for the better part of two years to convince Park District officials to build a boat storehouse and facility where the river meets the lake.

"The boathouse had a whole set of challenges," Purciarello said, noting that it would have taken up half an acre and had to be built underground. "I really tried to make that work. It wasn't a hollow, shallow commitment on my part."

Purciarello said he'll convene a public meeting on the DuSable Park plan at the end of this year or beginning of the next. After that, he'll hire consultants to help flesh out the design's details while steering committee members and locals fan out in search of outside funding. All told, Purciarello said, the project will cost more than \$5 million.

"The belief within the steering committee is that this project is of national significance, so there's no reason not to go to federal funding sources," Purciarel-

members of the Ironman® Triathlon World Championships treatment team



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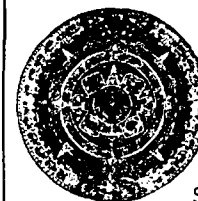
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